



Unknown (Rajasthan, Kota)  
*Vishnu Carried by Garuda Through a Stormy Sky*, ca. 1775  
opaque watercolor on paper, heightened with gold and silver  
9 13/16 x 6 11/16 in.  
Gift of Mrs. Horace W. Frost  
83.26.2

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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The god Vishnu, one of the three great deities in the Hindu pantheon, rides on Garuda, a creature that is half man and half bird. In each of his eight hands, Vishnu holds weapons and devices relating to his role as the preserver of the universe. The deity balances the powers of good and evil, and periodically he restores equilibrium during the universe's endless cycle of creation of destruction. While each age begins in a stable and balanced state, demons gradually corrupt humanity until destruction is imminent. In times of great evil, Vishnu comes to earth in human form to destroy the demons and uphold *dharma*, the divine rule of virtue, righteousness, and duty.



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## DISCUSS

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This watercolor painting shows the Hindu god Vishnu riding on Garuda, a creature that is half man and half bird. Roll your cursor over the image to view the details closely.

- What human features appear in Garuda?
- What bird-like features does he have?
- What are he and Vishnu doing?
- Where are they?
- How is Garuda assisting Vishnu?
- What adjectives would you use to describe Garuda?
- Each of Vishnu's hands holds a weapon or tool. What do you think these tools might do?
- What do you think of Garuda?
- What skills or powers does he have?
- What types of adventures do you think he might have?

Click on the Explore tab to learn more about how Vishnu maintains balance between the forces of good and evil.



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## CREATE

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This watercolor painting shows the Hindu god Vishnu riding on Garuda, a creature that is half man and half bird. Roll your cursor over the image to view the details closely.

Take inspiration from Garuda and invent your own creature that combines human and animal features. What is your creature's name? What special characteristics or skills does your creature have? What types of adventures will he or she have? Vishnu and Garuda are on a mission to destroy evil demons and fight for goodness, righteousness, and duty. Will your creature have an important goal or mission to accomplish?